

2016 Autumn Equinox—Lower Tamar Lake to Moreton Bridge 8th October

Due to holiday commitments I was unable to take this walk on the day of the equinox (23rd September) so I had to leave it for almost two weeks to fulfil the obligation.

It was unseasonably warm and dry with the sun shining and very quiet and still – ideal conditions for a walk unlike the usual equinoctial gales. The quiet was only broken by the occasional buzz of flying insects and the distant cackle of a Magpie, the chuckle of Blackbirds and churring of tits.

Midges were hanging in the air where sunbeams pierced the shadow and the rainbow glints of spider web festooned across the towpath. Each side of the path were hedged in by browning, dying Bracken fronds and umbellifer seed heads.



Hawthorn fruits



Betony



Red Bistort

Despite it being October, there were still a few flowers open. Red Campion and Herb Robert were to be found along the whole stretch I walked whereas Water Mint, Honeysuckle, Hedge Bindweed, Betony and Woundwort were only found occasionally in distinct habitats. One or two plants of Red Bistort were in flower

Fungi were very infrequent on the walk south, but on the return more and more could be seen. The combination of walking into the sun and the fact that fungi seem to shelter on the south side of trees and shrubs combined to hide them. On my return, the sun was behind me and the fungi were no longer hidden by trees and easier to spot. I saw a good selection of Common Inkcap, Honey Fungus, many Blushing Brackets a few Common Puffballs and Bleeding Broadleaf Crust.



Bleeding Broadleaf Crust



Common Inkcap



Common Puffball

Quite a number of insects were about ranging from Common Darter, a wasp busily chewing wood off the wooden bridge over the dam slipway and butterflies too. I recorded Small Copper, Red Admirals, Commas and very faded Speckled Woods. I noted two 7-spot ladybirds and amongst the Hoverflies, one that I could identify, *Scaeva pyrastris* – the Pied Hoverfly and a Dock Bug.



Comma



Red Admiral



Small Copper

Hips and Haws were abundant with infrequent Rowan and Sloe. Honeysuckle defied the seasons with flowers and fruit on the same branch. There was the gentle rain of falling leaves.

There were birds about calling as well as showing themselves. The highlight must be the Sparrowhawk that stayed in his tree by the tow-path until I was right on top of him when he ghosted away low between the tree trunks. An interesting hot spot was amongst the large mature trees between Dexbeer and Moreton Bridges. Here I stood amidst a mixed flock of calling and feeding birds comprised of Willow Tits, Goldcrests, Blue Tits and Great Tits – a magical moment.

It was interesting to note that Geocaching has made its way to the Adqueduct with a box placed behind the BHC marker stone a few hundred yards upstream of Moreton Bridge.



Scaeva pyrastris



Common Darter



Dock Bug